

# The Library Assistant:

*The Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians.*

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## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Announcements and Editorials	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
The Future	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	30
Practical Bibliography	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
Classification in Modern Life, by W. C. Berwick Sayers	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	35
Easter School	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40
Appointments	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40
New Members	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The next meeting of the Association will be held at the Public Library, Great Smith Street, Westminster, S.W.1., on Wednesday, February 20th, at 7.30 p.m., through the kindness of Frank Pacy, Esq., Chief Librarian, Westminster Public Libraries, when a discussion on "Open Access, is it a failure?" will be opened by the members of the Croydon Libraries Staff. Mr. Pacy will occupy the chair on that occasion.

The Junior Section will meet at 7 p.m., when the "Pros and Cons of the Open Access System" will be discussed.

The March meeting will take place at Deptford Central Library, Lewisham High Road, S.E.14., on Wednesday, March 26th, at 7.30 p.m., when a paper will be read by Mr. Hodges, of Hackney, on "The Private Press: its place in Librarianship."

**Next Council.**—The next meeting of the Council will be held at the National Library for the Blind, on Wednesday, 13th February, at 7 p.m.

**The Next Examinations.**—The next Library Association Examinations will be held from the 19th to the 26th of May. In consequence of representations as to the early closing dates that have been in operation lately, the Education Committee has decided to extend the date until the 31st of March. Will students take careful note of the fact that in no circumstances whatever can entries be received after that date. As evidence of the increasing recognition of the Examinations, it is interesting to learn that there were no fewer than 621 entries for the December Examinations.

**Lectures on Libraries.**—During February several important lectures will be held at University College, which should attract large numbers of our readers. They are:—

February 13th: "Oxford Libraries," by Mr. Strickland Gibson, M.A. (Lantern illustrations.)

**February 20th:** "The Work of Special Libraries and Intelligence Bureaux in Industry," by Mr. J. G. Pearce, B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E.

**February 27th:** "Printing Presses and Machinery from the Earliest Times and their Influence on the Book and Newspaper," by Mr. R. A. Peddie. (Lantern and other illustrations.)

The lectures are on Wednesdays at 5.30, and admission is free.

## EDITORIALS.

**The Honorary Secretary.**—We congratulate Mr. Gurner Jones, our Honorary Secretary, on his election to the chairmanship of the Membership Committee of the Library Association.

**The Preliminary Test.**—In accordance with announcements that have been made during the past two years, it has been decided definitely, that the Preliminary Test shall be abolished after May this year. As a consequence of this decision, candidates for the sectional examinations will in future be required to submit certain recognised educational certificates such as the Oxford or Cambridge Senior Local, Matriculation, or other examination laid down in the Syllabus of Information.

We are aware that there is a strong difference of opinion as to the wisdom of this decision, but, speaking personally, we cannot but feel that the step is one in quite the right direction if librarianship is ever going to rank as the "profession" that we are always talking so airily about. In any case, the matter seems to have passed beyond the bounds of discussion by reason of the fact that the announcement has been made public for some two years, during which time some library authorities have actually adopted new staff schemes specially framed to meet the altered conditions.

It is now necessary for library authorities to be apprised of the fact in order that they may have in mind for all future appointments the educational requirements asked for before any one can sit for the Library Association's Examinations.

**Whist Drive.**—While the Council maintains that the social side of the Association's affairs should be kept subservient to the educational and professional side, there is no doubt that an occasional social event affords a splendid opportunity for members to get to know one another, and for this reason, if for no other, the Council records with satisfaction the success of the Whist Drive held on Wednesday, January 9th, at St. Bride Institute.

Over fifty members and friends took part, and the provision of prizes was on such a generous scale that a good proportion of

those present took away some kind of a prize. The prizes were presented by Mrs. W. H. Parker (wife of the President), and among the winners were Mrs. R. Cooper (wife of the Hon. Treasurer), Mrs. and Miss Thorne, Miss G. Rees (Fulham), Miss D. Jenkins (Hackney), and Messrs. Bridge and Rutter (Battersea), Austing (Walthamstow), and the President.

Votes of thanks to Mrs. Parker for presenting the prizes, and to the Honorary Secretary for his skill as organiser and M.C., concluded what was unanimously voted a very pleasant evening.

**A Public Pleasure Library.**—Whatever else we may disagree about, we shall agree that in matters of libraries America can teach us a good deal. At the moment, we are enchanted with an interesting form of War Memorial in Harvard University Library in the shape of what is known as the Farnsworth Room. Its object is to stimulate the reading of modern literature for the very pleasure that it affords. It is a large room with a high ceiling, Turkey carpet on the floor, and walls lined with dark oak bookshelves, above which are prints of Old Masters. The furniture consists of long tables with desk chairs. In addition, there are armchairs and settees such as might be found in the drawing-room of a large hotel.

The books are of the best printed editions obtainable. "The selection is catholic enough to provide a literary feast for all. The realist can have his Samuel Butler or Shaw; the romantic can have his Jeffery Farnol or Barrie; the dilettante with only five minutes to spare can dip into Stevenson's essays, or the latest volume of literary impressions.

The giants of literature are there in collected editions—Meredith, Hardy, and Conrad. There is autobiography for all temperaments and moods—Gibbon, Newman, and Barbellion. The poetry section includes Rupert Brooke and the Sitwells. The biography section includes the Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Strachey's "Victoria." On the travel shelf may be found Hakluyt's Voyages and An Account of Scott's Last Expedition. While on the classical shelf the best modern translations are to be found as well as the originals. In short, all branches of literature are represented in its ten thousand volumes.

To ensure that students will not abuse the room by making it a study, an attendant keeps an ever-watchful eye, ready to rebuke any who may produce text-books or notebooks (other than literary commonplace books)."

The second quotation is from "The Woman's Year Book, 1923-1924":—

"Training in Librarianship is given at the School of Librarianship of the University of London, University College, Gower Street. The school is organised so as to give a systematic training on a broad basis to students who are already working in libraries, or who propose to adopt Librarianship as their

profession. It is also available for others who desire to increase their knowledge in one or other of the branches of its work. A preliminary examination, such as the London Matriculation, is desirable but not essential. Students can either take the whole full-time course or put in one year's full time and finish their diploma work by attending evening classes; or they may take the whole of their theoretical training at evening classes spread over a period of about four years, while working at a library in the daytime. Fees: 1 to 16 guineas per session.

"Prospects for women in public libraries do not appear to be hopeful at present, male candidates frequently being asked for in advertisements for the higher posts. The number of appointments in private libraries, or in the libraries of Universities or learned societies, is limited. Children's libraries, owing, no doubt, to the need for economy in public services, have not increased to any great extent, but this should be a particularly suitable opening for women when they are more generally established."

We are not sure that we can agree entirely with the last paragraph; there was never a time we believe when the prospects for women in libraries were more hopeful than at present.

**The Westminster Judgment.**—An epoch-making legal decision on libraries was made on 30th January by Mr. Justice Tomlin, who on the application of the Attorney-General, granted an injunction against the Westminster City Council forbidding their use of the St. Martin's Library to enlarge their City Hall or for any purpose other than that of a public library. The case has caused considerable public interest as the unwise and mean-spirited action of the Westminster Council in closing St. Martin's Library—possibly the best known library in London—was one of the gravest concern for other libraries; and it is gratifying to know that a higher authority pronounces it illegal.

**Appreciation.**—It is not often that public libraries get such praise in a paper like "The Sphere" as was meted out recently over the well-known initials C.K.S. We can assure him that his laudatory remarks are noticed and warmly appreciated by us. There is one paragraph in particular that is deserving of the widest publicity, reflecting as it does such a completely changed outlook on the functions of a public library.

"I take a very great interest in public libraries. There was a time when I looked upon them with suspicion. So many things have been said about them as instruments for the wholesale distribution of the more foolish kinds of fiction. There is no reason why those who cannot afford to buy books should not be supplied with them at the expense of their more fortunate friends. Moreover, novels are an important part of literature. Unlike an earlier period, the finest expression of the mentality of our age has been provided by fiction and pure drama, and not by poetry. Galsworthy, Wells, Shaw, Barrie, Conrad, are greater men of letters than any of our living poets. One of the oldest and one of the youngest of our writers—Mr. Hardy and Mr. de la Mare—have excelled in both arts. It is only the prig among us who despises the novel of to-day."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

To the EDITOR of *The Library Assistant.*

PUBLIC LIBRARY,

BETHNAL GREEN, E.2.

December 28th, 1923.

DEAR SIR,—No doubt but what you will have had brought to your notice the paragraph "The Library that helped" in the daily press of the 18th inst.

The letter referred to (copy enclosed) was read to my Committee, and they thought it of sufficient importance to be reported in full in the Council's Agenda; from whence it was, I presume, culled by the Press. The publicity was none of our seeking, although I am glad that it was deemed worthy of the attention of the Press for the reason that such publicity is all for the benefit of Public Libraries generally and show the non-user that our Public Libraries are not merely distributors of germ-laden novels.

Yours faithfully,

J. RADCLIFFE,  
Borough Librarian.The Editor, *The Library Assistant.*

DEAR MR. RADCLIFFE,

Re THE BLIND STUDENT UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

I do not think it is necessary for me to tell you the result of the recent B.A. English Honours Examination. The press has told you everything there is to tell, except the part your library played in this important event. I have used and examined books in nearly every library in London (my requirements being very great), and when two years ago I found your library (then in Old Ford Road) I realised at once that here, in my own borough, was (from the student's point of view) a literary gold mine.

Now that the exam. is over, I gladly acknowledge the great part the library was responsible for. It will be gratifying to you to know that you have contributed to my daughter's success considerably. Please convey to Mr. Vale and Mr. Smith my warmest thanks for having given me valuable advice and time, and also to all your staff for the courtesy and patience displayed to me on all occasions. As a Bethnal Green man I am proud of the library, and I am convinced of the fact that it is the best local library in London. I compliment you on the rare and valuable books you have in your possession.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) R. ISAACS.

An excellent piece of work upon which everyone concerned is to be warmly congratulated.—ED., *L. A.*

**Librarianship as a Career.**—We think our readers may be interested in the following extracts from two recently published books regarding the prospects of librarianship as a career, in the one case for men—presumably—and in the second for women. They are such an improvement on the kind of statement that appeared in bygone years that we take the liberty of quoting them here.

The first is from the fifth and revised edition of "Careers for Our Sons" (A. and C. Black):—

"It is not generally realised that every aspect of library work has undergone considerable change during recent years. Not only have public libraries been extended and reorganised on an altogether more satisfactory basis, but

there have been entirely new developments in the shape of rural, technical, and trade libraries. Rural libraries are concerned with the distribution of books over a county area, including outlying villages and towns. Trade and technical libraries are becoming increasingly a part of the organisation of most of the chief libraries in the principal industrial and commercial centres—London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Coventry. Libraries are also being formed as part of the works and office organisation of large manufacturing and mercantile houses. These libraries are in no sense recreative, but are used for reference purposes when information is desired on any particular trade, processes of manufacture, source of supply of raw materials, or potential markets.

Remuneration throughout the profession has greatly improved. The average salary of a librarian of a public library is £300 to £400; in more important central libraries of chief towns it may be higher, ranging from £500 to £800, and there are a limited number of posts at £1,000. Junior assistants of sixteen to eighteen commence at £60 or £80, and senior assistants receive £150 to £250, £300 and proportionately greater salaries in libraries of larger towns. In University and other libraries of similar standing the remuneration is generally somewhat higher. The Library Association has been largely responsible for enhancing the prospects and raising the standard of education required in the profession. Its examinations are open to all those actually engaged in libraries, and courses of training are provided by correspondence courses through local secretaries. There is also an excellent School of Librarianship at University College, London. It has now been established nearly four years. The course of study leads to a diploma, and gives a systematic training on a broad basis to students who are already librarians, or who propose to adopt librarianship as a profession. The day course covers two years, unless a student is a graduate of a University, in which event he may take the course in one year. The evening course may extend beyond two years if a student is unable to complete the necessary subjects for the diploma within that period. The sessional fee is 16 guineas. The subjects include cataloguing and indexing, classification, bibliography, library organisation and routine, literary history and book selection, palaeography and archives. It also includes lectures in the newer branches of library work, such as commercial and industrial libraries, rural libraries, and library work for children. Students who have already obtained their diplomas have invariably been placed in appointments, some of them in very famous libraries, and others in public libraries, University libraries, club libraries, and institutional libraries."

**St. Marylebone.**—Sixty-seven years' agitation reached fruition in December when the St. Marylebone Public Library was opened by the Mayor, Mr. Councillor G. B. Brooks. The stock at the opening was in the region of 10,000 volumes, which it is hoped will be doubled in the first year. In the course of some remarks, Alderman Sir H. New paid tribute to the fact that the whole of the work of getting everything ready had been accomplished in a little over four and a half months.

**Open Access.**—The Libraries Committee of Poplar have recently reported to the Council in favour of adopting open access. In the report, the usual arguments for and against have made their appearance.

Alterations have also been completed at Gravesend for transfer to the open-access system and for the provision of a separate children's corner.

**January General Meeting.**—The monthly meeting of the Association was held on January 23rd, at the Fulham Central Library, when, the railway strike notwithstanding, an appreciative audience listened to a paper on "Children's Libraries at Home and Abroad," by Miss G. Rees, F.L.A. (Diploma), and a Member of the Council of our Association.

After refreshments, provided by the Fulham Staff Guild, had been served, Mr. J. E. Walker, F.L.A., the Borough Librarian, took the chair and briefly introduced the speaker.

Miss Rees covered a wide field in the course of her remarks, evincing from the outset a detailed knowledge of her subject, which, with her enthusiasm, completely held her hearers. After briefly tracing the development of the children's library movement, she laid special stress on methods employed abroad in this department of our work. Thus, the librarian in the United States has an almost international task to perform through the agency of his stock, for the children of many nationalities must be welded into Americans. Miss Rees remarked that although we could copy some of the American methods with advantage, she did not advocate stocking our children's libraries with American juvenile literature to an undue extent. Ideals entered largely into the paper, which was, nevertheless, far from devoid of practical points.

The ensuing discussion was quite one of the best we have heard of late. Mr. Ralph Wright wanted less methodology in this branch of our work, and he, in common with other speakers, suggested that provision should be made for younger children than is usually done—that those led by the hand should have their books as well as their older brothers and sisters. Mr. G. R. Bolton thought that too much could be made of the "Story Hour," and suggested that it was our primary duty to provide the children with matter to read, not to read to them. That provision could be made only through the medium of a carefully selected stock. Miss Exley mentioned the help obtained through having a list whereon the young readers could put the titles of any books "We should like to read," the juvenile equivalent to the adult suggestion form. Mr. Vale and the Honorary Secretary also contributed to the discussion, after which Mr. Benson Thorne proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Miss Rees for her paper, mentioning in so doing, the splendid way in which she had stuck to our Association through the days of the war, and the great impression made by her recent diploma thesis on this subject on the examiners.

Votes of thanks proposed by the Honorary Secretary to the Fulham Libraries Committee for their courteous invitation, to Mr. J. E. Walker for his kindness in presiding, and to the Fulham staff for their hospitality concluded a most successful evening.

**Football Match.**—The second match of the season between members of the Association was played on Wednesday afternoon, January 23rd, on the Harrow Athletic Ground, Stratford, for the loan of which we have to offer our best thanks to Mr. J. W. Crosby, of the West Ham Public Libraries. Unfortunately the weather was again unkind to us, with the result that the stand held but a sprinkling of spectators, among whom we noticed Miss and Mr. Benson Thorne. The idea of the game was for the Greens to obtain their revenge on the Whites for their 5—1 victory on the last occasion, and this the Greens proceeded to do. Garbed in red instead of green they won a very exciting match by seven goals to four, although playing ten men throughout.

The most prominent men were undoubtedly Cook, the White's centre-forward, two of whose goals were splendidly obtained, and who would doubtless have made a closer game of it had he been better supported, and Foskett, the Red's centre-half, whose defensive and constructive play were of a high standard.

It is doubtful if Johnston's idea of moving from goal was of advantage to his side, although he stemmed many Red attacks with the aid of Spinks. It was, however, chiefly at half-back where the Whites lost, only Hounsome making a show against the Red's four forwards, and his continuous duels with "Jock" Wilson provided plenty of thrills. The latter was always a dangerous raider and Bristow was a capable centre whose passes were generally given to advantage. Roser and Bailey formed a strong right wing, the latter improving tremendously during the second half and swinging across some very useful centres. Each of the Red's forwards left his mark on the score sheet, viz.: Wilson 1, Bristow 2, Roser 2, and Bailey 1. Fellows at right back displayed a very useful kick and usually cleared his lines well, while Gaskin proved safe in goal except for Cook's pile-drivers, which were hardly to his liking! Although the heavy ground was an undoubted handicap to ball control the game was fairly fast and very enjoyable, being ably refereed by Mr. R. Radley, of East Ham, to whom our thanks are due for officiating under such miserable conditions.

Before the next game is arranged we shall wait for some sign of improving climatic conditions!

F. T. B.

**Messrs. W. & G. Foyle, Ltd.**, 121-125, Charing Cross Road, have been appointed agents for the publications of the First Edition Club, and orders and subscriptions for these publications (except from members of the Club) should be sent to Messrs. Foyle. The first book issued is a limited edition of a hitherto unpublished manuscript of William Hazlitt's, namely, his "Reply to Z." This

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was written in reply to an attack on Hazlitt, signed "Z," which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and is in the writer's most trenchant style. Mr. Charles Whibley contributes a prefatory note.

PLEASE NOTE.

The Honorary Secretary of the Library Association has been requested both by other bodies, and individuals particularly, to say that *any requests for information* as to the Educational Courses, Correspondence Classes, or about the Examinations themselves, should be addressed to the

HONORARY SECRETARY,  
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,  
PUBLIC LIBRARY,

BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, S.W.1.

This particular library is set up in large type owing to the large number of letters more vaguely and insufficiently addressed to the Public Libraries, Westminster. This invariably causes delay, and frequently disappointments insomuch that some communications never reach the Library Association Office at all.

As all the results of the December Examinations are not yet to hand, publication of the lists must be held over, but candidates are notified of their success or failure as the examiners' reports come in.

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THE FUTURE.

There can be little doubt that librarianship is on the verge of a new era. We have been moving towards it for some years, and the announcement on another page of the abolition of the Library Association's Preliminary Test seems likely to do more towards ushering it in than we are likely to realise at first.

It means that in future, aspirants to responsible positions in libraries must have initial specified educational qualifications that are recognised throughout the country. Whether this is going to prove the fine thing that is expected is a very vexed question, but the fact still remains that from next year onwards the professional examinations, which are now recognised by practically every library authority in the country, will be closed against all who lack the specified initial educational requirements.

These changed conditions have been already foreshadowed in several revised scales of salaries and conditions of service that have reached us. The important change seems to be the introduction of two grades of library workers, one of technical people, and the other of clerks or attendants.

The most important scheme that we have seen is the one that concerns the staff of the Westminster Public Libraries, a copy

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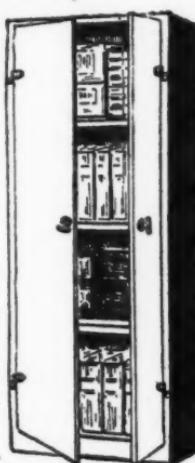
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of which has been sent to us. It is, in fact, of such vital importance that we venture to give it some prominence here. The essential change is the introduction of "a new and lower class of Library Attendants (youths and/or girls of about 17 years of age or over) as distinct from the grading of Assistant Librarians or Library Assistants. If this suggestion is approved the Assistant Librarians would, of course, be relieved of a great deal of fetching, carrying, replacing and dusting of books, and all the more mechanical work not calling for long experience or high qualifications. They would thus be left much more free for the more important work in connection with the selection, acquisition and treatment of the books (their accession, location, classification and cataloguing), as well as for many varied and necessary clerical duties. Again, the distinct division thus marked out would tend to remove blocks in the higher grades, and relieve the Council and the Committees of those isolated applications for special increases of salaries, above the scale, which have occurred in the past."

"The Libraries Committee's recommendations for a reclassification of the Libraries staff are as follows:—

<i>Librarian</i> (dropping the designation "Chief Librarian")...	Principal officer.
<i>Deputy Librarian</i> ... ...	Salary under consideration by the General Purposes Committee and yet to be fixed.
<i>Sub-Librarians</i> in charge of libraries ... ... ...	Graded as and with Staff Clerks.
<i>Assistant Librarians</i> (hitherto termed Senior Assistants)...	Graded as and with 1st Division Clerks.
<i>Library Assistants</i> , Class I* ...	Graded as and with 2nd Division Clerks.
<i>Library Assistants</i> , Class II* ...	Graded as and with 3rd Division Clerks, thence after 12 months on maximum of scale to Library Assistant, Class I.
<i>Junior Assistants</i> ... ...	Graded as Junior Clerks, thence after 12 months on maximum of scale to Library Assistant, Class II.

\* Hitherto termed Junior Assistants.

All below the before-mentioned grades to be:—

*Library Attendants* (youths and/or girls) on a scale of weekly wages (no bonus).

Grading as Sub-Librarians, Assistant Librarians and Library Assistants to follow service and special qualifications.

All future entrants to the library service, in whatever grade, except Library Attendants, to present Matriculation or School Leaving Certificate, its equivalent or other approved educational qualification, with evidence of having passed in the subjects of English, Latin and one modern language. After five years as Library Assistants, and subject to the possession of at least four certificates in Librarianship, either of the Library Association or of the University of London (which must cover the subjects of

English Literary History, Bibliography, Classification and Cataloguing) they shall be eligible for promotion to fill any vacancy in the grade of Assistant Librarians, but only on the recommendation of the Head of the Department.'<sup>14</sup>

Library attendants commence work at £1 a week (no bonus), rising annually by 5s. per week to a maximum of £3 a week.

Junior assistants commence work at £50 or £60, rising by annual increments of £10 to £80, plus bonus.

The chief purpose that we have in mind in giving such prominence to this question, is to impress upon Chief Librarians and Library Authorities the urgent importance of keeping in mind these new requirements and conditions when making appointments in the near future. To ignore them will be to make Librarianship more of a blind alley occupation than it has ever been in the past.

### PRACTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY.

As several students have asked for assistance in connection with the Library Association's Examination in Bibliography, we have compiled the few notes which follow, together with a few selected questions.

Students who have examined the Library Association's *Syllabus of Information* will know that the requirements for Section II. are set out under five heads, the first of which is:—

#### *Collation and Description of Books.*

Irregularities in the make-up of early books. Collation by quires, by aid of water marks, signatures, catchwords, etc. The parts of a modern book. Difficulties in ascertaining if it is perfect. New issues. Reprints. New editions. Forms of bibliographical description. Essentials of standard descriptions of different classes of books.

By the collation is meant, roughly, the statement of the actual physical extent of a work, *i.e.*, the number of volumes it is in, pagination, illustrations, maps and similar material separately or otherwise paged, in short everything that goes to make up the sum total of the work.

The term also indicates the mechanical process of examining a book section by section, checking the illustrations, etc., by the printed list at the beginning of the work, and carrying out all the checks necessary to ensure the tracing of imperfections or defects. This treatment is sometimes meted out to every book that comes into a library, but it is generally agreed that the time spent does not justify the results, except of course in the case of rare or valuable works, all of which should be carefully collated before being marked or passed into circulation.

The process may be carried further by including statements of the kind of paper used, the binding, typographical features, and descriptive annotations of the actual contents.

In many modern books imperfections and defects—which must be distinguished—are not a particularly serious matter, as publishers will generally make good such faults, which generally consist of duplicated or missing sections, missing illustrations, off-settings or over-printings, and the iniquitous and growing custom of issuing useful maps and diagrams as end papers. In older books, however, the matter is very much more serious owing to the difficulty or impossibility of making good the irregularities that are more likely to be found.

The collation of the text of a modern book is effected by means of the signature letters or figures printed at the foot of the first page of each section, but old works which have neither signatures nor carry-over catchwords, may be collated by means of the watermarks which were in general use before the advent of machine-made paper. Failing these, the process is much more intricate, involving the actual checking of the letterpress.

In true folio books the watermark will be found in the middle of the page; in quartos it is folded into the back of the book, mid-way between the top and the bottom. In octavos again it will be found in the back of the book towards the top of the page.

It may be said that a book is imperfect when something is missing from it, and that it is defective when, while being perfectly complete, in the ordinary sense, there are defects such as foxed plates, cut margins, badly printed pages, etc.

#### QUESTIONS.

- 1.—What methods are known to you of collating ancient and modern books ?
- 2.—What is the difference between a defective and an imperfect book ?
- 3.—Write a brief essay, in the space of half an hour, on book collation, its purposes and methods.
- 4.—Define the terms watermark, catchword, signature, quire.

#### *Readings.*

Brown: *Manual of Practical Bibliography*.

Feipel: *Elements of Bibliography* (University of Chicago).

Slater: *How to Collect Books*.

*(To be continued.)*

## CLASSIFICATION IN MODERN LIFE.

By W. C. BERWICK SAYERS, F.L.A., *Chief Librarian, Croydon Public Libraries (Hon. Fellow, A.A.L.)*.

(Continued from p. 16.)

11.—To carry the matter a little bit further in connection with libraries. The vertical file, apart from the card index, is probably the most useful instrument that libraries possess, and I want to press this specially upon your attention. I have said that the problem of the librarian is to deal with a number of individual entities, books, which are constantly increasing and decreasing. His life would be simpler than it is if he had to deal with books only. In a properly organised library he has to deal with pamphlets, broadsides, prints, photographs, newspaper cuttings, small manuscripts, maps, and an infinite number of small separate literary and pictorial items, which won't stand on shelves, often won't bind into volumes, and which have a habit of getting into odd corners and becoming of no use. The vertical file is the natural rescuer of all these things and the means whereby they are made accessible. The use of the vertical file in relation to newspaper clippings is fairly obvious. That is to say, clippings on matters of substantial interest from newspapers are made regularly in many libraries. These are classified minutely by Dewey into indexed folders, and they can be paraded in the service of readers at any time. Pamphlets are treated in precisely the same way, and there is a most effective pamphlet file of this kind at the International Institute of Bibliography at Brussels. Illustrations and maps are more difficult material. I have thought of many ways of filing them and have seen as many. It is easy to pack them away neatly into boxes, and this would be quite satisfactory if no one ever wanted to use them after they were packed. The modern librarian's business, however, is not merely to preserve things; indeed that is a very small and minor part of his business; it is to try to make the public use them to the fullest advantage. Very large maps and pictures, if they have any place in a library at all—a matter about which I have grave doubts—must, I suppose, be framed or exhibited on walls in some way or other. We need not consider them seriously as the problem here is one for the art gallery. Most libraries, however, have large numbers of small pictures. These are best dealt with by mounting them on mounts of a uniform size, and then filing them vertically in drawers under their subjects. The classification of illustrations is one of the most difficult works of the classifier. A book may deal with a

large subject such as Geology or Botany, and its classification is simple; illustrations, on the other hand, will frequently deal with such matters as a view of a fracture in a chalk cliff, or the pistils of a bluebell—subjects infinitely more minute than those dealt with in the average book. This means that the fullest and most minute classification that is available is necessary in classifying illustrations. Maps can be folded and placed into folders, and the folders classified in the vertical file. So can every document or article in a literary or pictorial shape which a library receives. You will thus visualise as an adjunct to the future library a vast vertical file which is, as it were, a parallel to the shelves of books; and in this file in strict classified order will be all the material literary and graphic which supplements books, and to every folder in this file there will be an entry or entries in the card index. Thus the multitude of pamphlet boxes and similar cases should disappear and the vertical file take the place of them all. I don't know any library yet which has pursued the vertical file quite as thoroughly as I have suggested. There is a remarkably effective information file of this kind at Coventry. I have about fifty drawers of vertical files in action at Croydon, but perhaps the nearest approach to the perfect file is that of the International Encyclopædia which forms part of the International Institute of Bibliography at Brussels. Here the whole of the sides of a large room are taken up with drawers of vertical files in which clippings, pamphlets, magazine articles and similar material are filed according to the Brussels Expansion of the Dewey Classification, and they form together the largest and most effective encyclopædia of current knowledge that exists.

12.—As with written and printed documents classification should be adapted to the stores and supplies which a library, or for that matter, any other business house must possess. There is probably nothing more irritating than the way in which stores and stationery are kept in the average office. They are kept in cupboards somewhere, somehow, neatly or otherwise, according to the neat or slovenly character of the person who has charge of them. The first thing to do is to make a classification of this material bringing together all printed forms, all manuscript forms, all writing papers according to their kinds, all writing implements and so on. The receptacles or cupboards into which these things are to be placed should be numbered in accordance with the scheme of classification, and certain drawers should be given to certain things and to those only. It should be possible for a man in going to his envelope shelf to be able to see at a glance the ten or a dozen types of envelope that he finds it necessary to use in his business. If every receptacle for stationery has a number,

and every type of stationery has another number which is a sub-division of it, there should be no difficulty in finding anything at any moment, or in keeping a check over the amount and use of the supply in question.

#### MATERIAL AND MEN.

13.—The modern factory is a remarkable instance of applied classification. You will remember probably that organisation and works-management have changed in recent years from something managed by more or less rule-of-thumb methods, to a system arranged on scientific lines. In the old days experience extending over a certain length of time, possibly years, enabled a factory manager to distinguish his best operatives. Nowadays, especially in high speed factories such as those which are fairly common in America, careful tests are applied to the workmen, and they are classified according to ability, rapidity of work, and, in short, the special job for which they are best adapted. This preliminary classification enables the manager to give to each man the job which he can do best and speediest. Records of efficiency are kept, and adjustments can be made when they appear to be necessary.

14.—As with the men so with the factory processes. By classifying each manufactured article into a number of processes taking a certain time and requiring certain apparatus and certain labour to handle that apparatus, speeds in production such as were undreamed of a few years ago have now been achieved. You may imagine the assembling of the parts of a motor car. An endless band travels the length of a factory, about one hundred yards. At the place where the band rises from the floor the frame work of the chassis is laid upon the band and it travels slowly the whole visible length of the band. In the completing of the car which has just been laid down there are at least thirty operations. Each of these has to be completed by a mechanic while the car is travelling a space of a yard or so. On each side of the band are tables or pigeon holes containing the parts which are required directly the car reaches them, and workmen are stationed at each of these points. The result of this classification of processes is that the car, which goes on as a mere flat framework at what may be called the beginning of the band, at the end of the band in less than a quarter of an hour is driven off into the yard a completed car ready for service. This is an almost exact description of the process as it takes place in the assembling works of the Ford Company at Trafford Park, Manchester. That factory is an object lesson in classified work. The whole building is divided up according to the processes, so that related processes stand side by side, and every form of waste movement is eliminated. I am not a raging enthusiast for such factories. They

appear to me to reduce human skill to the level of the merest machinery, but undoubtedly they produce results beyond all former computation. I am ready to admit that when a motor car is made by twenty or thirty men none of them can be expected to have any interest in the finished machine. At the same time I would ask you if the criticism ought not to apply equally to a football team ? Ought not the players to feel no interest in goals which they themselves do not score ? The answer to that is obvious, and it is possible that teams of workers may take a collective pride in a collective result. The point is worth considering.

15.—To reduce the question of classification to a very simple form. Have you considered an ordinary carpenter's nail box ? It is a box with compartments, and it is extraordinary that you often find nails of all sizes mixed in one compartment, screws of all sizes in another, staples of all sizes in another, and so on ; and when the worker is using these articles he has to go through a brief process of sorting out each hole in order to select the nail or screw of the size he requires. A classification of these things first by sorts and then by sizes would save a moment or two on every operation involving their use, and this in the course of a year would reckon out at a very formidable amount of time. That is the problem in a nutshell. What might be done by the carpenter if he troubled to classify his material is done on a comprehensive scale for a whole factory, and the saving of the moments of every operative means rapidity and cheapness in production.

14.—Office work of all kinds has benefited tremendously in recent years by the methods which the classification of libraries has suggested to business men. We have classifications of processes, classifications of customers, classifications of accounts, all accompanied by card indexing, and all directly the result of the original labours of librarians. Take the modern much advertised loose leaf ledger. It is merely a conversion of the sheaf catalogue which has been in use in libraries for at least fifty-two years, and as far as I know was first used in the University Library of Leyden, in Holland, in 1871. It is a requirement of a classified catalogue which registers a collection which changes that the leaves forming the catalogue shall be mobile so that new entries can be inserted at any point without dislocating the general order of the catalogue. It was to produce this result that the card catalogue and the loose leaf catalogue were invented. So we may say, without undue exaggeration, that many of the finest business methods of the present day had their beginnings in libraries, because these libraries were classified and needed some key to their classification.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

15.—At the beginning of this lecture I made some disparaging references to the lack of organisation which seems to exist in the average household. I suppose that the ideal housewife has a place for everything and everything in its place. I have never met one yet except in those unhappy households where the house runs the housewife, and the husband is a tolerated nuisance and there are no children. A house with everything in its place and a place for everything is a classified household; and it is a sad fact that children and husbands make hay of most classifications of this kind. Nevertheless, it does seem to me that more system might exist even here. A young couple starting house-keeping would furnish to the best effect if they made a classified list of the various departments of a house and of things in the order of their use. They would not then, as sometimes happens, furnish the drawing room and dining room excellently, and forget the staircarpet and the frying pan. And in the ordinary business of home life a classification of the household income under its various headings might insure a satisfactory spending or saving of that income; a classified cookery book might remove cold mutton from its present important place into its right position in the scheme of edible things, and a careful classification of cleaning and other necessary but—to man—abominable processes, might result in their achievement in a much more comfortable manner than seems to be the case to-day. How many housewives keep a card index? Some of them keep diaries and account books in which they cannot find anything after they have written it there without a lot of search. Why not a card index of a classified kind? It is a simple, flexible, interesting and useful instrument which a woman might use to the greatest possible advantage.

16.—I do not wish to conclude without uttering a warning which is as necessary for myself as for anyone whom I might address on the question of classification. Classification is not an end in itself; it is a means. It is machinery for making the way of life smoother and more comfortable. There are some men unfortunately who come to the conclusion in practice if not in theory that the machine is more important than the way of life. If a man prefers to live in muddle, and finds greater happiness in it than a systematic home, by all means let him live as he chooses. If in a library the making of files involves more work than will ever be balanced by the service the files will render—although I cannot imagine such a case—by all means let us do without files. It is merely common sense that if it costs you £10 a year to guard property which is worth only £9, it is better to

risk the loss of that property than to indulge in disproportionate expenditure upon its protection. But this applies to everything in life. We have always to weigh whether any process which we undertake will produce enough good to justify the expense of the process. Librarians have frequently indulged in complicated forms and methods which have nothing to recommend them beyond their ingenuity. I do not think this charge can be brought against the uses of classification which I have dealt with to-night. Their whole object is to save time and to save life. That is the business of the classifier in relation to books and to students, and that should be the purpose of classification and its adaptations in relation to modern life in all its forms.

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#### THE EASTER EXCURSION TO HOLLAND.

Arrangements are now in progress for the Easter visit to Holland, and a capital programme is in prospect. London will be left on the afternoon of Thursday, April 17th, and visits are expected to be paid to Rotterdam, Dordrecht, The Hague, Amsterdam, Leyden, and elsewhere. London will be reached on return early on Tuesday, April 22nd. The provisional total cost, including travel, hotel and board, is £8 8s. 0d.

All members of the profession, *and their friends*, may take part.

Entries cannot be received after February 28th, and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Henry A. Sharp, Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon.

W. C. BERWICK SAYERS,

*Honorary Organizer.*

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#### APPOINTMENTS.

\* Harold E. Waites, Assistant, Watford, to be sub-librarian-in-charge, South Branch, Fulham.

\* Member A.A.L.

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#### NEW MEMBERS.

**Associates** : Miss K. M. McGrath (St. Marylebone).

**Members** : Miss R. Bowley (St. Marylebone); Miss Beryl Nevard (Lambeth).

**Liverpool and District** : **Members** : Eric G. Hatton, Stanley Caldwell, Sydney A. S. Hickman, I. B. Greenwood (Warrington).

**South Coast Division** : **Member** : Miss Alice Whittington (Portsmouth).

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#### COUNTY BOROUGH OF IPSWICH NEW FREE LIBRARY.

An appointment will be made to the post of Chief Librarian. Duties to begin May, 1924. Commencing salary £400. Experience of Free Library "Open Access" and Children's Department essential. Applications, stating age and qualifications, together with recent testimonials, must reach the Secretary, Ipswich Corporation Museum, by February 11th.